

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2905

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 21925

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: SNAR TH
SUBJECT: ALLEGATIONS REGARDING USE OF RTG HELICOPTERS FOR NARCOTICS

REF: STATE 246624

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF MEMORANDUM AMBASSADOR AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT DOREY LEFT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI AND DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR PRAKOP ON OCTOBER 17. DETAILS OF CONVERSATION IN SEPTEL. END SUMMARY.

QTE THE U.S. EMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT ROYAL THAI ARMY AND THAI NATIONAL POLICE DEPARTMENT HELICOPTERS ARE BEING USED, ON OCCASION, TO MOVE NARCOTICS FROM NORTH THAILAND TO THE PROVINCES OF CHON BURI AND CHATABURI ON THE GULF OF THAILAND. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION COMPLEMENTS AND AMPLIFIES INFORMATION PROVIDED SOME FEW DAYS AGO TO THAI NARCOTICS AUTHORITIES.

HELICOPTERS INVOLVED REPORTEDLY ARE DUE FOR PERIODIC MAINTENANCE AT A ROYAL THAI ARMY OR THAI NATIONAL POLICE MAINTENANCE FACILITY IN BANGKOK. THE AIRCRAFT LEAVE NORTH THAILAND WITH A FLIGHT PLAN INDICATING THEY ARE GOING TO BANGKOK FOR MAINTENANCE, PICK UP THE NARCOTICS AT A PRE-DETERMINED LOCATION, AND DROP THE NARCOTICS AT ANOTHER AGREED LOCATION BEFORE PROCEEDING TO THE MAINTENANCE FACILITY. ANY DELAYS EN ROUTE ARE EXPLAINED AS TEMPORARY SHUTDOWNS FOR MINOR ADJUSTMENTS AND REPAIRS.

ROYAL THAI ARMY AND THAI NATIONAL POLICE AIRCREWS ARE HIRED BY NARCOTICS MIDDLEMEN FOR B200,000 TO B300,000 PER TRIP, USUALLY CARRYING 800 TO 1,000 KILOGRAMS OF OPIUM
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EACH TIME. THIS IS A FAVORED METHOD OF TRANSPORTING

RAW OPIUM AS THE DISTINCTIVE ODOR OF RAW OPIUM RENDERS ITS TRANSPORTATION MORE DIFFICULT BY OTHER METHODS. PICK-UP POINTS ARE USUALLY AT BAN KAE NOI, THAM NGOP, PIANG LUANG AND BAN MUONG HANG IN CHIANG DAO DISTRICT, CHIANG MAI PROVINCE. THE DELIVERY POINTS ARE UNKNOWN.

THE SIWAN SYNDICATE IN LAMPANG, LAMPANG PROVINCE, IS REPORTEDLY A MAJOR USER OF ROYAL THAI ARMY AND THAI NATIONAL POLICE HELICOPTERS FOR NARCOTICS TRANSPORTATION. THIS SYNDICATE IS ALLEGEDLY HEADED BY SIWAN SITTIPHUMISATAN OF LAMPANG, WHO RECENTLY ROSE TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE SYNDICATE UPON THE RETIREMENT OF HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, SIMA CHUMINCHAK. ALSO REPORTEDLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE SIWAN SYNDICATE ARE: CHIANG MAI; POLICE SERGEANT CHUMPHON MANIKAN, ALSO KNOWN AS "PHON"; CHUMPHON'S FATHER, THAI NATIONAL POLICE CAPTAIN WAN MANIKAN, AN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER AT THE CHIANG MAI JOINT SEIURVTY OPERATIONS CENTER; AND AN UNIDENTIFIED ROYAL THAI ARMY SERGEANT WHO SOMETIMES WORKS WITH CHUMPHON. USUALLY, AT LEAST ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TRAFFICKING SYNDICATE ACCOMPANIES THE HELICOPTER.

REPORTEDLY IN JANUARY 1975, TIEN TZU-JUNG (3944/1311/2837), OWNER OF A NARCOTICS REFINERY IN NORTHERN CHIANG RAI PROVINCE, INFORMED THE GUARDS AT THE REFINERY THAT A WHITE THAI NATIONAL POLICE HELICOPTER, TAIL NUMBER 1902, WOULD ARRIVE AT THE REFINERY TO PICK UP A LOAD OF MORPHINE AND TRANSPORT IT TO AN UNSPECIFIED LOCATION "IN THE SOUTH." A THAI POLICE CAPTAIN IDENTIFIED AS "TIM", ASSIGNED TO CHIANG RAI PROVINCIAL POLICE HEADQUARTERS, WAS ALLEGEDLY THE PILOT OF THIS HELICOPTER. HE WAS ASSISTED BY HIS MECHNIC, THAI POLICE CORPORAL PRAMUN SARASIN.

ALLEGEDLY IN NOVEMBER 1974 APPROXIMATELY 1,000 VISS OF RAW OPIUM BELONGING TO THE SHAN UNITED ARMY WAS BROUGHT INTO THAILAND WHERE IT WAS PICKED UP BY A THAI NATIONAL POLICE HELICOPTER FOR FORWARDING ONWARD. THIS WAS REPORTEDLY DONE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF A FORMER CHIANG RAI PROVINCIAL POLICE OFFICIAL IDENTIFIED ONLY AS LIEUTENANT COLONEL PHAT. END QTE.
WHITEHOUSE

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